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KINGSTON ONTARIO CANADA

1814

A LETTER,

ADDRESSED TO THE

Gentlemen Commoners of Worcestershire,

ON THE DANGER OF

INNOVATION TO A GOVERNMENT,

And more particularly on the

FATAL TENDENCY OF THOSE MEASURES,

EMPLOYED BY

FACTIOUS & DESIGNING MEN,

TO ALIENATE THE

Subjects of Great Britain from their Allegiance,

AND PROVOKE THEM TO

Insurrection against the State.

By a GENTLEMAN of WORCESTERSHIRE.

“ Friends—Countrymen, lend men your Ears.”

“ Omnis subita immutatio periculosa est.”



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LETTER, &c.



AT a time like the present, when the Constitution of our ancestors seems to be threatened with innovation, if not with destruction, it becomes the duty of every man, who is a true lover of his Country, to defend it, as far as in him lies, from the attempts that are made against its safety and existence ; it is the *imperative* duty of every man who is bound by allegiance to his Sovereign, and duty to his God.

One man, at this important crisis, has stood forward particularly to stem the torrent of popular and mistaken opinion. Descended from an ancient and illustrious House, Lord Somers, in a manner worthy of his dignity, and becoming his high station, has openly published his opinions and his abhorrence of that system which, if not avowedly, is secretly aiming at the overthrow of the Constitution, the blessings of which he and his ancestors have so long enjoyed. His arguments, well selected and strenuously enforced, must, if they meet with that attention which is due to his laudable exertions, produce

conviction upon every mind that is not blinded by prejudice, or poisoned by obstinate perversions. If they be read, they must be accredited by every one who is not decidedly hostile to their intentions, or who wants not intellectual capacity. His Lordship, as far as I understand the pamphlet he has written, has combatted the different sentiments of the advocates of Universal Suffrage and equal Representation, and those who style themselves the moderate Reformers : he has shewn that the former are contrary to the ancient spirit of the British Constitution, and that as there is no other system but this on which a radical Reform of Parliament or change of Representation can be effected, *radical* Reform, though by some temperately styled *moderate*, is obviously aimed at by the latter.

Having thus spoken, it would appear presumptuous, if not altogether useless in me to add any further illustration to that mass of argument and evidence which his Lordship has adduced in defence of the British Constitution, as it is now established. The design he must have proposed to himself, is, I conceive, fully answered, by the way in which he has executed it, and even if it were not, I should be but little encouraged to hope for success in an undertaking in which much greater ability had failed.

Nevertheless, it appears to me that a different train of reasoning may, perhaps, not without utility, be pursued to the accomplishment of the same desirable end; and if this be done by a Commoner and not a Peer of the Realm, I trust it may tend to prove how forcible an influence the *good example* of elevated rank has, and should ever retain, over the minds and conduct of men in less exalted stations. I trust it may shew that though inferior in dignity, they yield not in patriotism to their superiors, and are as ready as willing to stand forth in the defence of their Country, and the protection of her established and well regulated Government.

My wish, therefore, is to persuade those whom his Lordship's reasoning may not have convinced, that the times in which we live are pregnant with danger to ourselves and our posterity; to persuade them that those who pretend to be the friends of liberty are in reality its subverters, and without interfering in the question of Reform, and every mad scheme which they propose, to shew that the measures we contemplate, and the actions we witness, however plausibly for our benefit they may be carried on, can, if they succeed, ultimately end in nothing but what true Britons would wish to prevent, and these democrats inwardly long to effect.

That liberty is an invaluable blessing to a nation, when that nation knows how to enjoy it, is proved by the records which our forefathers have left us, and by the good we have ourselves experienced; but that liberty can be converted into a source of the most mischievous actions, and by abuse be productive of calamity to a people, is a truth too evident from the history of every nation that has ever owned its name, to be denied. The Government of Kingdoms in their commencement has generally been arbitrary—a founder has had a sort of natural right over his subjects—a conqueror an absolute and uncontrolled sway, till by degrees, in the progress of states, when time has diminished the natural authority of the one, and moderated the undue tyranny of the other, the people obtain the blessing of a full, yet well-regulated freedom, and the Monarch feels the importance, yet dare not outstep the bounds of his authority. As long as a nation continues in this state, as long as the balance of empire and liberty is upon an equal poise, when the people look to their Sovereign for paternal care, and the sovereign relies on the affections of his people, so long may they esteem themselves happy, and he expect a prosperous issue to his councils. But in time as civilization advances, as the power of the kingdom is increased abroad, the simplicity

of former ideas is turned into more unreasonable notions, and the moderation of liberty degenerates into the madness of licentiousness—then the people complain at what is termed the undue prerogative of the Crown—undue, not in comparison with the former influence it possessed and which they acknowledged, but in comparison with the magnified and false ideas they entertain of their own rights; instigated by a spirit of jealousy and discontent, they watch, with an eager anticipation, every measure of their rulers, upon which they can ground a petition for redress, of what is called their wrongs, or which they can make a vehicle for the expression of their dissatisfaction.—This is a dangerous period for a government—the too rigid denial of their complaints may, and the too free indulgence to their will, must, from the very principle of human nature, be ruinous to its ancient and established form—

"Periculosa severitas—flagitiosa largitio."
Tacitus. Ann. Lib. 1. Chap. 36.

It is but too evident that the picture I have drawn is a melancholy one of our own times. England now having attained the highest eminence of glory in the sight of her neighbouring nations, having run through the primary ages of simplicity, and the middle one of honest independence, is come to the

period of refined luxury, which is more or less conspicuous in the history of every wordly State. With the enrichment and the consequence of her subjects, their arrogance not their gratitude is increased ; tired of the Constitution which has rendered them what they are, they desire to change it for a new one, not for a better, and in the impulse of popular phrenzy murmur against their Prince, their Rulers, and their Laws ! What is the principle they pursue ? A principle that was emitted from the hot-bed of the French Revolution, and that, for the last twenty years, has been rocked in the cradle of sedition at home. When that flagrant torch was carried through the provinces of France, and cast around the glare of its wide-wasting and pestilential light, it would seem as though a spark had fled from it into a bordering kingdom, and been cherished by secret and inextinguishable fuel, till it could burst forth in all the volume of its flame.

It may, perhaps, be thought, that judging from circumstances, as far as they have yet advanced, we have little or no reason to apprehend the fatal consequences I predict as likely to ensue ; but I will say, that judging from history, as far as history can be any guide, nothing can be more certain than that the object of those vile calumniators of liberty, who

are at present seducing the minds of the lower, nay, perhaps some of the higher classes of our community, is destruction to the venerable Constitution of these Realms. Every design that is to be accomplished, must have a commencement--every work that is to be wrought, a foundation; and these men, in the fulfilment of their nefarious schemes, have had the wisdom to pitch upon a virtuous name, under the mask of which they may conceal the blackness of their intentions: liberty is the cloak of their treason—the veil of their deceit—the specious guise under which they approach and entrap the unwary—the attractive poison which they infuse into the innocent and misguided herd.

Credulity has ever been considered one of our strong national characteristicks; from the evidence we have had of later years, I think we may fairly argue that it is but little diminished. When numbers living in a christian country like ours, with all the advantages of a christian doctrine and evangelical instruction before them; when numbers, I say, can be seduced by the lying artifices of a Johanna Southcote* to be her disciples; when well-informed men can be deluded by a vile impostor, Ann Moore; and, (if I may be allowed to treat it with a levity, ill-

* See the Evening Mail of March 7, 1817.

fitted to the dignity of the subject,) when many can give evidence to the old, though well-contrived, fabrication of a pig-faced lady, it seems not singular that such multitudes of our fellow countrymen should regard as oracular the plausible speeches of a few visionary orators, who style themselves the Friends of the People and Reformers of Parliamentary Corruption.

This then is one of the sources of the late outrages which have much disgraced our civil conduct; this is one of the causes of “the madness of the people.” Taking advantage of the spirit of ignorance which pervades the lower classes of the community, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Cobbett, and the others of their detestable junto, have, by every act of human contrivance, playing upon vulgar error, by every machination of wicked ingenuity, working upon uncontrolled imagination, led astray the poor deluded wretches whom we have lately seen figuring around the waggon rostrum at Spa-fields, and applauding language and principles which their instructors should have blushed to own. But how artful, how wary has been the conduct of these popular deluders; assembling a mob whom, in all probability, they knew must, soon or late, suffer the punishment due to their offences, they have crouched themselves under the shadow of their

wings. By proclamations, cautiously worded, yet at the same time calculated to answer their purpose, they have led their disciples to ruin, without exposing themselves to danger: and yet, when this has been so manifestly evident that one might have supposed the lowest of understandings to comprehend it, they have ably succeeded. The effect produced on the minds of the commonalty, by the gross lies and specious harangues of these "dark designers," has been great, and requires a potent remedy. I have heard it from a man whose loyalty was unshaken, and who had never attended, as a disciple, the meetings called by Mr. Hunt, that he believed *he was indeed* a friend to the poor. This man was an inhabitant at Bristol at the time this anecdote occurred; he and his family were suffering under the severest afflictions of famine and penury, and had travelled from the place of their abode (so much celebrated a few years ago by Mr. Hunt's achievements there) to seek relief from his parish. The scene of misery he had fled from, where thousands were perishing like himself, and where thousands received nourishment from the charitable and immense donations of the affluent and compassionate, *might* have convinced him of his error—he heard what his followers said and he was blinded.

But I may be thought to digress. If we look into the History of England and recur to

the reign of Richard II. we shall see, perhaps, some analogy between the famous insurrection of Wat Tyler, in 1381, and the present state of the public mind; we shall find then also, that the spark of sedition, being kindled in France, spread into our happy isle, and communicated its blasting influence; animated, or rather infuriated with a spirit of equality and independence, the leaders of sedition adopted the same line of conduct as may now be marked. Mr. Hume informs us "that one John Ball, a seditious priest, who affected low popularity, went "about the country and inculcated on his audience the principles of the first origin of mankind from one common stock, their equal right "to liberty and all the goods of nature, the tyranny of artificial distinctions, and the abuses "which had arisen from the degradation of the "more considerable part of the species, and the "aggrandizement of a few insolent rulers.— "These doctrines, so agreeable to the populace, "and so conformable to the ideas of primitive "equality, which are engraven in the hearts of all "men, were greedily received by the multitude." A verse, expressive of their levelling sentiments, was in the mouth of every common person, to the following effect:

When Adam delved, and Eve span,
Where was then the gentleman?

Prepared by these and every other kind of artful incentive, too much resembling those of

the present day, the insurgents awaited but for a favourable opportunity for the ebullition of their fury. It was not long ere they insulted the mother of their youthful Sovereign, compelled her to be an instance of their equalizing system, "pillaged the warehouses of merchants," "burned the palaces of the nobility," "cut off the heads of all the gentlemen they laid hold of," and boldly demanded a conference with their King. Who, in these treasonable events, will not recognize the late scene of outrage and insult to the royal authority, which disgraced the streets of our metropolis; who will not recollect the frame-breaking at Nottingham, and other manufacturing towns; the pillaging of Mr. Beckwith's shop; the attempt on Mr. Platt; and the burning of Belvoir?*—Even the very perpetrators themselves must acknowledge the similarity, for on the same principles they have founded their plan.

But if there be found men who may feel less apprehension as to the result of the present dangerous ferment of the populace, I would tell them, that though we ought not unnecessarily to feed our alarm, we ought not to be lukewarm. I would tell them, that the first demonstration to sedition should be narrowly watched—that

* Duke of Rutland's.

even a tendency to it, should be scrupulously and jealously regarded.—“The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water.” “No man can tell, when a river breaks through its banks, and rushes from its accustomed channels, what devastation it will occasion.” I would not have the liberties of the people abridged, nor would I wish to see the authority, the established, the ancient, the constitutional prerogative of the Crown, diminished or curtailed—

“*Omnis antiquae quetes Regibus quondam paruerunt—Quod genus imperii primum ad homines justissimos et sapientissimos deferebatur.*”

Cic. de leg. c. 3.

Innovation in a government, even when *made with* no treasonable designs, is often only the prelude to greater evil. If the people could be supposed to act solely from the agency of their own will, the impulse of their own desire, and the influence of their own reflections, (which would be supposing an impossibility) we could even then expect nothing from their ignorant and unenlightened minds, but an extravagance of demand and an unreasonableness of conduct. Man, in the frailty of his nature, and proneness to iniquity, were an unrestrained bias given to his inclinations, and the rein let loose to his passions, could not be expected to display the temper and moderation necessary in well regulated

Governments. “Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles,” and if this be the case, when he be left to himself, how much truer must it be when his evil imagination is goaded to sin, and captivated to crime—when temptation lies before him, for the commission, and apparent disappointment behind him, for the *non-commission* of guilt—when we see the minds of our peasantry and artizans spurred on by the false representations of ill-designing and self-interested men—when we witness every vehicle of deception employed to urge them to failure in their duty—and this, too, acting upon their fragile minds, at a time when unavoidable and poignant misery heightens their feelings and irritates their tempers—when famine and all the severe and accumulated ills of poverty instigate them to acts of imaginary relief—what can we expect but anarchy, confusion, rebellion, their minds poisoned, their allegiance shaken, their morals tainted, if we leave them to be driven by the guile of their leaders, the fury of their passions, and the pressure of their wants, and pour not in a ray of light upon their benighted souls.

I have said that innovation is dangerous, and I say so again. By innovation, I mean a change in the long-established order of things, by the introduction of novelty, however trifling

or inconsequential that innovation may at first appear. If I were to illustrate my assertion by proofs, deduced from the annals of antiquity, I could produce facts so numerous and so strong, that the most incredulous must be convinced, but I think, that without referring to those dismal periods, the history of modern times and of our own nation, is sufficient to put us on our guard. What was it that made us accountable as a nation, for the murder of Charles Ist? Innovation—what was it that stamped the same eternal and disgraceful dye upon the French, when they guillotined their virtuous Sovereign and his amiable family? Innovation. In the first instance, the agitated question of Charles's merits and demerits as a monarch, is of little consequence to our subject. These are not times, however meritorious the enterprize, for a man to endeavour to vindicate the injured fame of unfortunate Princes: his attempt would probably be useless; though he should bring forward authentic and undisputed facts, he would meet with a reception little consonant to the generosity of his undertaking.

But the immensity of their offence who perpetrated this diabolical act, in defiance of human and divine laws, is as obvious as that the sun rises in the east, and can only be questioned

by those who question the existence of a supreme power. Has not that volume of profound and useful learning, Lord Bacon, told us, that "*a King is a mortal God on earth, to whom the living God hath lent his own name as a great honor,*" and that "*he then who knoweth him not is next an Atheist, wanting the fear of God in his heart.*" Can this be disbelieved, and if it cannot, can this be reconciled with insult, violence, murder, offered to and inflicted on the person of a legitimate and authorized King? No! The very detesters of Charles's name must blush at the more odious ones of his enemies, and own that in sinning against him they sinned against God!

"I know, indeed, that the sufferings of Monarchs make a delicious repast to some sort of palates;" and, if I am to judge from facts, I must suppose it to be so in this instance. For what did the people of England obtain by their dissolution of Monarchy: when the nation, who almost adored and respected a Henry VIII. a century after threw down the statue of a Charles, and inscribed on his pedestal these words, to be a memorial of their shame—

"*Exit Tyrannus, regum ultimus—The tyrant is gone, the last of the Kings.*"*

* Burke.

When they had done all this, and in doing it branded their name with infamy, what did they obtain? A Cromwell—a protector—a preserver of their liberties—a man, who after having destroyed the sovereign power, by the help of fanatics and discontented men, soon “openly *set himself up* above *all* things that were ever called sovereign in England,” “who reduced to subjection a warlike and discontented nation, by means of a mutinous army, and commanded a mutinous army by means of seditious and factious officers, “who was humbly and daily petitioned that he would be pleased, at the rate of millions a year, to be hired as master of those who had hired *him* before to be their servant, “and who had the estates and lives of three nations as much at his disposal as was once the little inheritance of his father.”

This was innovation, this was the progress, and this the end of that innovation which marked the commencement of Charles's reign. Unhappily for Englishmen, they have had this tremendous example before their eyes, and yet, it seems, they have but little profited among the lower orders of society, from its lesson. With all the horrors attendant on it, with all the violations of morality, consequent on it, there was one feature, which marks the character of these more depraved times, wanting to it, viz: the

scandalizing, the mockery of religion: a subject to which I shall presently have occasion more fully to advert. This last height of human immorality it was left for France to attain, and having reached the maturity of its abomination there, it has been communicated to our neighbouring shore.

Thus I have proved the danger of innovation to a government, the danger of yielding too much at first to popular outcry, lest the whole be demanded at last. Instead of the evil complained of being remedied; instead of abuses, if any there exist, being corrected; instead of a nation's attaining that speculative and visionary system of happiness and primitive liberty, for which they stake their present enjoyments and rights, it appears that, though for a moment they may gain the fanciful summit of their hopes, they must ultimately fail, and suffer a more severe, a more entralling yoke than the one they have shaken off: and can it be otherwise.* “The institutions of nations are the work

* 25 v. 38 c. Ecclesiasticus.

“How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours, and whose talk is of bullocks?” &c.

VERSE 33. “They shall not be sought for in public counsel, nor sit high in the congregation; they shall not sit on the judges' seat, nor understand the sentence of judgment: they cannot declare justice and judgment; and they shall not be found, where parables are spoken.”

of time and experience; reason and uniformity are the first requisites for governing;"* and is this to be expected from a mean, illiterate and furious rabble? A rabble, the most forward and the most enlightened of whom know not the nature of the object they pursue!† No! It is a paradox the most absurd, that they whom imbecility or passions prevent from understanding, or from feeling the advantages of a well-tried and universally extolled Constitution, can frame, out of their own imaginations, a better, either for themselves or their fellow creatures.

It must not, however, be imagined, that I have meant to establish a comparison between the actual scenes of revolutionary bloodshed, during the reign of Charles I. and the perilous symptoms of these later days. To do so, indeed, would be ridiculous: but to point out the conformity, the similarity of all original principles, and primary efforts of rebellion, is not so. That discontents, grievous and turbulent discontents, do exist, is sufficient to arouse our apprehension and alarm. It is not because they are, as yet, immature, or because we may not

* Chateaubriand of Buonaparte and the Bourbons.

† "Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the most part knew not wherefore they were come together."

have felt their most powerful influence, that we are to neglect them. Even if they were in embryo, let not true patriots wait for their production, lest they may have to rue their birth ; “*neither let* any prince or state be secure *concerning discontentments*, because they have been often, or have been long, and yet no peril hath ensued ; for as it is true, that every vapor or fume doth not turn into a storm, so it is, nevertheless, true that storms, though they may blow over divers times, yet may fall at last, and, as the Spanish Proverb noteth well, “The cord breaketh at last by the weakest pull.”*

If any one be inclined, from his principles or his ignorance, to laugh at this reasoning, as the terrified admonitions of a pusillanimous mind, he is welcome. Certain as I am, that its spirit will be agreeable to every well-intentioned of my countrymen, I have little need to regard the sentiments of the evil minded or the weak. For my part, I was born as I will die, an Englishman at heart—a lover of England—a venerater of her ancient Constitution, and admirer of her ancient renown. Concordant with these, has been every idea I have cherished, and living, as I have lately been, in a country where Henry Vth was born, where the monarch, who in the “fulness of

* Lord Bacon.

his manhood," was to be the glory of our isle, was rocked in the cradle of his infancy—living in a country where on every bound of the horizon I behold the vast domain, the mighty tenement of some paramount Lord, who exercised an almost imperial sway—the former stupendous dwellings of valiant chiefs who have for ever enrolled their name in the page of historical renown, by their martial exploits in France, I feel a magnified and elevated idea of the past glories of our ancestors, a pride which should swell every Briton's heart, that we are the descendants of so illustrious a race.

When on the other hand I contemplate the lamentable effects of popular phrensy and revolutionary madness—when I behold, as I may do, the ruins of these once formidable castles, the awful immensity of their bulwarks levelled with the ground—their possessors gone, their titles vanished, I cast an eye of melancholy anticipation towards the events of these rueful times, lest the great, the glorious, and the good, which we now possess, should, in their turn, fall a sacrifice to the fury of faction—the barbarity of civil dissensions. They teach me how unstable is all human grandeur—how perishable all human glory—and how whilst the wearers fancy themselves secure in their enjoyment,

"A breath unmakes them as a breath hath made."

If again adopting the mistaken opinion of an enthusiastic and celebrated French writer, any one shall object, “*that* there is no instance of a free people destroyed by a civil war, and every country that has been assailed by storms of its own raising, has always enjoyed a greater prosperity after they were *past*,”* I tell him his argument is as impious at it is false; for admitting it to be true, how can we presumptuously hope to receive mercy, nay, even favour, instead of punishment from the hands of an all-just God whose commands we have violated; does not his law tell us, “*that* we are not to do evil that good may come,” and is not this a principle of our faith, and one by which every christian should regulate his public as well as private conduct! We know it to be so, and every temptation, however alluring to violate it, should be rejected with abhorrence.

But this proposition also is false, and this I think may be manifested from the revolution in France, of which I proposed to speak.

It is now twenty-four years since, that awful event was brought to a crisis by the decapitation of Louis XVIth. The people of France had arrived to that point, when as I have before observed, every powerful empire is likely to feel the effect of some tremendous concussion—a

* Chateaubriand.

spirit of insubordination and visionary notions of liberty had crept into the lower orders of the community—such dispositions implanted on a soil so congenial to their nourishment, both by nature and cultivation, soon produced their noxious fruit; like the apples of Sodom, fair without, but bitter and poisonous within. Having no real grievance to complain of, and without daring to elicit a murmur against a Sovereign whom his most inveterate enemies cannot but have acknowledged to have been the mirror of virtue; they fancied ills which had never existed, and imagined evils which never had occurred. With the virtuous spirit of reformation, or rather innovation, they set about the work, which had been conceived in the womb of ambition, and hatched in the minds of seditious and aspiring men—it was the non-resistance of this innovation in time that cherished its advancement and encouraged its growth, till at length grown powerful because it had nothing to oppose, and strong because it had nothing to overcome, the bonds which contained it burst—the shackles of constraint were rent asunder—and it was let loose upon the world, a monster arrayed in abomination, and armed with desolation from the nursery of hell.

Now let us turn for the justice of this description to a passage in Mr. Burke,* speaking

* Page 195 of *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

of the French Government, he says, “whoever
 “has examined into the proceedings of that de-
 “posed Government for several years back, can-
 “not fail to have observed, amidst the incons-
 “tancy and fluctuation natural to courts, an
 “earnest endeavour towards the prosperity and
 “improvement of the country: he must admit
 “that it had long been employed, in some in-
 “stances wholly to remove, in many considera-
 “bly to correct, the abusive practices and usages
 “that had prevailed in the State; and that even
 “the unlimited power of the Sovereign over the
 “persons of his subjects, inconsistent, as un-
 “doubtedly it was, with law and liberty, had yet
 “been every day growing more mitigated in the
 “exercise. So far from refusing itself to refor-
 “mation, that Government was open *with a cen-*
“surable degree of facility, to all sorts of projects
 “and projectors on the subject; *rather too much*
 “countenance was given to the *spirit of inno-*
“vation, which soon was turned against those
 “who fostered it, and ended in their ruin.”

This will soon appear. The revolutionists, goaded on to the work before them, and not suffered to look back, increased in extravagance as they were magnified in bulk; their feelings irritated by the imaginary horrors of the bastile; their heads filled with scandalous exaggerations

about the royal expenses, pensions, &c. (the fallacy of which M. de Calone has detected), they thirsted for the blood of a Sovereign, who should have been dear to them by every tie of affection and duty ; no otherwise could their vengeance be sated—Louis XVI, a martyr to popular and fanatic justice, perished upon the scaffold. His death has branded an imperishable mark of infamy upon the brow of France—

“Stupendous in guilt, she shall lend us through time.”

“A Proverb, abyé-word for treachery and crime.”*

And what is this the result of? It is the result of that innovation which, in every state where it begins, no one can tell where it will end ; it is the result of that mistaken policy, and that pusillanimous conduct which the government of France observed towards the first appearances of discord among its subjects. Had it in time shewn a firm and dignified opposition to any thing like popular encroachment, they might, perhaps have been spared all the scenes of misery which have since rendered Europe and their country a theatre of the most intolerable woe ; had they crushed at first those diabolical passions and disorderly appetites, which “shake the public with the same

” Troublous storms that toss
The private state, and render life unsweet.”

* Lord Byron.

They would have preserved their balance of character in the scale of nations, and might still, as formerly have been, a great and happy people.

“*Terra potens armis atque ubere glebæ.*”

The French revolution was neither organized in a moment, nor accomplished at once. No, it was brought about by degrees : like a snake it crept within the sanctuary of the Constitution, and left behind upon its walls to after ages the slime which betrayed it to be a reptile.

Having shewn how dreadful was the termination of that bloody event to the royal family, let us now see whether the people and the agents, who set up a new system upon the ruins of their antient Monarchy, have profited from the change ; whether they have gained advantages proportionate to the dreadful means they used. If I were to relate every horrific scene of massacre and carnage, if I were to paint every picture of domestic calamity, how husbands were separated from their wives, children torn from their parents, how the aged were murdered because they were useless, and the harmony of families interrupted by the opposite sentiments of its various branches, I should display enough to convince any man that, even had the sufferings they endured under the old regime been great, they shrunk from comparison with the

complicated misfortunes they brought upon themselves, by endeavouring to amend it.

But these glooming tales are sufficiently known to be profited from. Even had they, after all the ensanguined deeds which were the natural work of the revolution, gained the equality, the liberty, the happiness, for which they had been striving, all might have been forgotten, and it had been well. This was not the case. A low bred foreigner, a Corsican, had been secretly working his own elevation. Buonaparte, by dissimulation and hypocrisy, by pretending to be the virtuous advocate of liberty, has “used the bloody corse of a Frenchman as a footstool to ascend the throne of France.”* Swaying, at last, the sceptre of imperial command, he taught the French people the vanity of this liberty, the deceit of this equality !! By giving them the hellish code of the conscription, he taught them a practical lesson, that their

* Delightful and auspicious to this infatuated nation must have been the prospect of a man who could use this bloody-minded language to his confederates—“Citizens, representatives!” said Napoleon, “upon the field of glory, my feet inundated with the blood of traitors, I announce to you, with a heart beating with joy, that your orders are executed, and France revenged. Neither sex nor age have been spared: those who escaped, or were only mutilated by the discharge of our republican cannon, were dispatched by the swords of liberty, and the bayonets of equality—health and admiration !”

visionary freedom was absolute unmitigated tyranny. "Then commenced the grand saturatioia of royalty, crimes, oppression, slavery marched at equal pace with folly, *all liberty expires,*" till at last, by his unbounded ambition, not content with having squandered away the lives of 500,000 Frenchmen in eleven years, by his unnecessary wars, the wrath of Heaven and of Europe was armed against him—he was hurled from his throne—the united armies of Europe marched triumphant to his capital—his kingdom had been dinded, and the vengeance of millions, the sacrifice of his lust, had been reaped upon every village of France, had it not been spared by the moderation of the Allies. Now the revolution was the work of innovation, and these are the works of the revolution. "What then," as says a French author, "were the fruits of our phrenzy and our chimerical experiments? Crimes and chains."

"Oh shame to thee, land of the Gaul !
 Oh shame to thy children and thee !
 Unwise in thy glory and base in thy fall,
 How wretched thy portion shall be !
 Derision shall strike thee forlorn,
 A mockery that never shall die ;
 The curses of hate, and the hisses of scorn
 Shall burthen the winds of thy sky ;
 And proud o'er thy ruin, for ever be hurled
 The laughter of triumph, the jests of the world."

If now it be demonstrated, (as I think it is) that innovation was the cause of the severe afflictions that fell both upon England and France during the periods I have delineated—the proposition is demonstrated that innovation is dangerous to a Government—I have not, indeed, gone through all the minute details of either revolution—I have not pointed out the gradations of encroachment—nor depicted the successive and the various machinations and contrivances which ended in the subversion of the two Governments—for this I deemed to be useless, from the notoriety of those warning events—every smatterer in history must be acquainted with them—but I have, in a clear line, traced the strides of despotism, from the downfall of monarchy, and the enthraldom of tyranny, from the degeneracy of freedom.

For the farther elucidation, however, of my subject, I shall briefly consider some of the means by which the wicked are now compassing their end.

One of the grand and most diabolical engines employed by the levellers in France, was the mockery, the undermining of religion, in the violation of which, they too ably succeeded. If we had been told in those days, when the earth

seemed overshadowed with darkness, that in twenty years after the same flagrant weapon would be employed to shake the loyalty of our land, not the meanest among us would have believed it. The principle then which pervaded the breast of every one, from the King to the peasant, except those of the “over-wise”—was, that religion was the foundation of every moral good; that it was the basis of our public prosperity and our private happiness—that on its existence they both depended—and when it perished, they must both fall.* This, I say, was the principle coherent and interwoven with the nature, the essence of a Briton. It was, at any rate, acknowledged in precept, if it was not exhibited in practice.

And would to God, that such sentiments had till this hour remained; would to God, that

* “*Sit igitur hoc ab initio persuasum eivibus—dominos esse omnium rerum ae moderatores Deos;—eaque gerantur, eorum geri vi, ditione ae numine; eosdemque optime de genere hominum mereri; et qualis quisque sit, quid agat, quid in se admittat, qua mente, qua pietate colat religiones intueri:—piorum et impiorum habere rationem. His enim rebus imbutæ mentes haud sanctæ abhorrebunt ab utili et a vera sententia.*”

Cic. d. leg. c. 2.

“*Pietate, ac religione, atque hæ una sapientia, quod Deorum immortalium numine omnia regi, gubernariique perspeximus, omnes gentes nationesque superavimus.*”

with all “the rust of superstition with which the accumulated absurdity of the human mind might have crusted it over in the course of ages,” this faith of our religion had remained and not been polluted by the profaneness of Atheists and Demagogues. For if it be banished from the minds and the hearts of our commonalty, if it be driven from the sanctuary in which it has ever yet dwelt with honor and advantage (and that we have just grounds to fear such an event, I will presently shew) we have every thing fatal to apprehend.* “If,” said Mr. Burke, “if in the moment of riot and in a drunken delirium from the hot spirit drawn out of the alembick of hell, which in France is now so furiously boiling, we should uncover our nakedness by throwing off that christian religion which has hitherto been our boast and comfort, and one great source of civilization among us, and among many other nations; we are apprehensive (being well aware that the mind will not endure a void) that some uncouth, pernicious, and degrading superstition might take place of it.”

* It will be seen that frequently in these pages I have made copious extracts from Mr. Burke. My reason for it is this, Mr. Burke is and ought to be considered an English classic, a model of profound learning, mature knowledge, and elegant style. His words produce conviction; they are authority, and therefore by them, rather than by my own, I am desirous to illustrate, and persuade. By a brighter luminary, my subject cannot be elucidated.

What then would Mr. Burke have thought had he lived (happily, perhaps, for England) to see “the things that are done in these our days”—had he lived to witness the “custom of profane scoffing in holy matters, which doth by little and little deface the reverence of religion”*—had he lived to hear that cannibal cry of France “Tous les Eveques à la Lanterne,” re-echoed by the mouths of English fanatics, and oh! (that climax of impiety, that immensity of abomination) had he lived to see our excellent and beautiful liturgy turned into contempt, by parodies wrought in the language of devils, and fashioned after the archetype of hell—what would he have thought? He would have thought that England had forgot her name—would have blushed for his country, and wept to have owned himself her son!

That this is not an exaggerated account, every one, who has been merely in the habit of reading the daily papers, will allow. Every one is aware that immoral pamphlets, seductive publications, and impious tracts, have been published at a cheaper rate than such books are generally sold for, by those who are systematically concerned in the subversion of religion and virtue: nay, in many instances, these blasphem-

* Bacon.

mous tenets have been distributed gratis to the ignorant and assembled multitude. From the report of the committee of secrecy, it will be found that the streets of London were defiled by 5000 placards posted upon the walls, which ended with this demoralized avowal—"No Bishops; they are only useless lumber." At the meetings held by "the detested propagators of these deleterious principles," songs of more than bacchanalian revelry, and parodies, more profane than the Io pœan of archangels, are chanted by the professors of their unhallowed rights, and recited in the tabernacles of their midnight orgies—

“Δύσηνόλιονες είσιν ἔχοντες γαρ ἵσγα πονηρά.”

Some of these parodies I have seen, and, if it were not that I should pollute my page, I would give them in their own abominable language. They are printed and published at Bristol: and what strikes one with peculiar disgust is their effrontery. At the end are these words "*by authority.*" In the name of Heaven by what authority are these memorials of national disgrace sent forth into the world? I know not, but I hope, for the sake of every moral obligation, it is a false one.

"The fool," indeed, "hath said in his heart there is no God:" and I would that these men might be accounted no otherwise than fools, for

then, perhaps, they might not have to answer for the sin of infidelity to God, and consequent treason to the state. As I have said before, the alliance of religion and civil polity is so close that the creed of the one is that of the other. They are united by the ordinance of the Almighty, and it is not in the power of human nature, to break the bond of their connection. The evil spirit may, for awhile, be allowed so to have dominion over them, as for some undefined cause, some impenetrable mystery, to suspend their united operations, but never to overthrow them, for they are both the work of the same omnipotent hand: and because they are thus co-existent and co-equal, religion in our jurisprudence is the *summum bonum* of reason, and christianity is incorporated into the common law.

“What is called the genius of a people, the spirit of their laws, the tone of public opinion, natural character and moral power, if not created, are at least fostered, guided, determined and confirmed by the influence of the religious principle, and rise or fall as its genuine authority flourishes or decays.” It was the knowledge of this incontrovertible truth, that made the revolutionists in France aim the first stab at the clergy and the church, and by turn-

ing them and their doctrines into contempt, and affecting them with ignominy, to eradicate the fear of God and the awe of Kings from out of the hearts of christians and subjects, and sear their consciences with sin. It is by the same knowledge, I fear, that our present reformers wish to set about their work, by effacing the traits of religion from the minds of our fellow Englishmen, and by thus making them the tools of their own sinister designs, finally convert our happy island from the palladium of piety, into the temple of atheism and guile.

If such be the malicious endeavours of our enemies, it is necessary we should oppose them. The writings of Voltaire and his infidel contemporaries, in a great measure aided, nay, perhaps were the primary cause of the revolution; and after such a prototype, those in England, at this period, may produce a similar effect. Since this cannot be the wish of any real patriot, he will anxiously desire to see their dangerous influence overruled, and their fatal tendency checked. They must be combatted by equal ability and superior zeal, displayed on the opposite side of the question; they must not be treated with indifference, and left to perish of themselves, lest they unexpectedly flourish and increase. Individual enmity, as well as general

hostility, must mark our national repugnance, and decided inveteracy to such a cause, must shew that we wish, and that we will, preserve alike the Constitution of our Church and State from impeachment and innovation, founded upon the experience of the past, and ratified by the prudence of the present. We must not confine our reflections to the domicile of our own breast, but expand them for the benefit and the *improvement* of our mistaken brethren; and then when we have drawn them from the labyrinth of false instruction, and the mazes of error, when we have unveiled them from the clouds of darkness into the dawn of light, and by example, as well as by precept, done every thing in our power for the “honour of God” and the salvation of man, we may fairly indulge a hope that our labours will not be vain, and that the pillar of our faith, as for ages it has been erected, for ages may stand. “If never to despair was the duty of a Roman general, it surely is that of a Christian,” and with this maxim, considering that we may not judge all for the iniquity of one; considering the extensive and sincere piety which breathes a pure and vital spirit into much of our estate; considering the number and the ability of those excellent institutions, which are now almost universally established in our isle; considering that God in

his mercy will not forsake his servants ; and considering too the paucity and the insignificance of those “children of the devil” that are working all the powers of darkness against our church, we will not fear. “In God we will put our trust,” and in “the arm of the Lord shall be our strength—“girt with the shield of faith”—and “the breast-plate of righteousness,” having on the “helmet of salvation,” and wielding the “sword of the spirit, which is the word of God,” we will not tremble, but wait the things appointed by his wisdom, and in the language of our inspired poet exclaim—

“ Well ! what are ages and the lapse of time,
 Matched against truths, as lasting as sublime ?
 Can length of years on God himself exact ?
 Or make that fiction, which was once a fact !
 No ! marble and recording brass decay,
 And like the graver’s memory, pass away ;
 The works of man inherit, as is just,
 Their author’s frailty, and return to dust :
 But truth divine for ever stands secure,
 Its head is guarded as its base is sure,
 Fixed in the rolling flood of endless years,
 The pillar of th’ eternal plan appears,
 The raging storm and dashing wave defies,
 Built by that architect who built the skies.”

COOPER.

I have dwelt the longer upon this head, because I deem it to be the most enormous in principle, and the most efficacious in action. We must now consider those two watch-words of the

reformers, here as in France: equality and liberty. With regard to the former, it is a notion which carries so gross an absurdity on its very face, if we take it in a literal sense, that it is almost needless to confute it by argument, and seems wasting good sense upon a worthless, visionary idea—the offspring of a distracted brain, and the speculative thought of a bewildered understanding and muddy imagination. If I were writing to the Spencean philanthropists who broach it, and the *διπολλοι* who entertain it, I could shew them the absurdity of their doctrines, if their minds had not been blinded to conviction and their hearts steeled against the truth, ere such confused dreams had ever disturbed them. What can be done in this respect for the lowest classes of the community, has been done, and I think in such a way as not to be without effect.* But as it may, perhaps, be taken in a less extensive signification than the absolute levelling of all human distinctions, and the exact division of property and lands, it may not be amiss to say a few words on it. And here it will be recollected that this also originated in the French revolution, and was one out of the many noxious poisons that

* I here allude to those little tracts and ballads published by the cheap repository, many of which are written by Mrs. H. Moore, and admirably adapted to the understandings of the vulgar.

were then transfused into this land. The tenets of the Spenceans are derived from the works of an author published about twenty years ago, at which time the triumph of the French levellers was at its height. In the year 1790, all titles of nobility and honor, as well as religious houses, were abolished by the national assembly. How great was their mistake if they grounded this upon principles of equity or wisdom. Nobility is necessary to the welfare of the State and the freedom of the people, for “a monarchy where there is no nobility at all, is ever a pure and absolute tyranny as that of the Turks; for nobility attempers Sovereignty and draws the eyes of the people somewhat from the line royal.”* He, therefore, spake wisely who said, “omnes boin nobilitati semper faaemus.” The man who would desire to mutilate this “graceful ornament to the civil order,” who would wish to destroy this “corinthian capital of polished society,” would wish to subvert the establishment of nature, and sin against the ordinance of God. He could feel no ennobling principle—no elevated dignity within his breast—he must be a mean, sordid, ungenerous being, without any reverence for the institution of ages, or any regard for the glory of men. A liberal mind would turn with aversion and horror from the

* Lord Bacon.

debasing idea, for it would be its nature to pay to nobility, honor, deference, and respect; and this in our country, where the nobility are decked for the most part with virtue, it is our duty to do; neither crouching to a Peer, because a title is superadded to his name, if his conduct in public and *private* life does not merit our applause, nor yet denying him that acknowledgement of rank, the expression of which is due as much to our own decorum as to him.

The proper pride of man should ever be kept up as the guardian of his honor and his virtues. Where, therefore, we see a fellow-creature, however elevated his rank may be, if the length of his pedigree and his titles be not equalled by the catalogue of his virtues, if his high ancestral honors be tarnished with the blemishes of immorality, debauchery, and profligacy, however splendid his abilities, or however captivating his address, we should turn from his pestilential encounter. We should look upon him the rather as one of those beautiful and attractive serpents who allure us into the path through which they glide, to become their victim, and infuse into us the venom of their nature. We should justifiably yield him but a small portion of that homage which would otherwise be due to his superior rank—just enough to shew him that though he had debased himself,

we retained a sense of that propriety and respect to our own character which he had wantonly dismissed from his.

Enough has been said to prove that the attempts of the modern abolisers of nobility and distinction are alike founded in folly and in crime. With Mr. Burke's opinion, as a sufficient corroborative, therefore, I will conclude. "Believe me, Sir, those who attempt to level, never equalize. In all societies, consisting of various descriptions of citizens, some description must be uppermost. The levellers, therefore, only change and pervert the *natural* order of things; they load the edifice of society by setting up in the air what the solidity of the structure requires to be on the ground."*

The next point of our consideration is liberty; first, how far it can be extended, compatibly with the real welfare of the people; and secondly, how far it is consistent with those present popular commotions, which are founded on its name.

With regard to liberty in a State as implying a Government not despotic, if it were merely to define it as a word, its signification would indeed be very ample; but viewing it in the light in which our ancestors beheld it; viewing it as that just and reasonable safeguard

* Page 72 of *Reflections, &c.*

against slavery and oppression, which they obtained by their blood for the good of their posterity, we shall find it to be more limited in its principle. "True liberty, said Lord Mansfield, in my opinion, can only exist when justice is equally administered to all, to the King and to the beggar."^{*} In this sense, I believe, it is enjoyed under our excellent Constitution. Redress of injuries is to be obtained by each and every class of the community. It is not here as in ancient Rome where the servant was a slave, whose life was at the disposal of his master's caprice—nor now, as in the feudal times, where every menial was bound to his superior Lord, and in almost as infinite a degree subject either by birth or obligation to his will. When Britain obtained the magna charta, she received that bulwark of individual independence which puts every subject out of reach of the monarch or nobility, under the protection of equitable laws, and makes every "man's house his castle." As they are now admitted, "the natural rights of the people of England, which are secured to them by their Constitution and laws, are the right of personal security; the right of personal liberty; and the right of private property;"[†]

* See Lord M's. speech in the House of Peers, 1770, on the bills for preventing the delays of justice, by claiming the privilege of Parliament.

† Custance.

“to secure the actual enjoyment of these,” the Constitution “has established some auxiliary privileges of the subject or subordinate rights, and these are principally “the Constitution of Parliament.”

“The limitation of the King’s prerogative, by bounds so certain and notorious, that it is impossible he should either mistake or legally exceed them without the consent of the people.”

“The right of every Englishman of applying to the courts of justice for redress of grievances; where his cause must be tried and determined by course of law.

“The right of the subject of petitioning the King or either House of Parliament; and lastly, the right of every man of having arms for his self defence and preservation, such as are allowed by law according to his degree.”

Now these are the unalienable rights which every one possesses who is born a Briton—these are more than are possessed by almost any other nation in the world—and these are all that can be possessed compatible with the existence of Government, and fundamental welfare of the State.

We have now seen the real rights and liberties, which our ancestors obtained for us by their blood, and which we should be ready to defend with ours ; we will next consider whether the measure lately adopted by those, who under a general name, call themselves reformers, are within the bounds and conformable to the nature of these rights.

And here I must be understood neither to be prejudiced by the spirit of party, or the malignity of faction. I do not pretend to discuss the opposite merits of whigs or tories, neither to accuse the one, nor to defend the other. I am writing, not upon a hackneyed and interminable question, but upon flagrant and notorious facts, upon facts which we have all witnessed, and which, if not upon our guard, we shall soon witness again, and facts, in the consideration of which the opposite tenets of whigs and tories should be laid aside, as totally irrelevant. The subject before us is one of public safety, not of public dispute, one as apart from any nominal distinction of policy, as the purity of patriotism is from the blackness of treason, one which calls alike for unity in thought, in council, and in action ; if England is to preserve what she has hitherto been, if she is to be saved from the bloody horrors of a French revolution, and the insufferable rigour of a Bonapartean tyranny.

Neither am I going to argue the point of Parliamentary Reform. It is not of the object in this place that I complain, but of the means Mr. Hunt and his popular adherents are employing to effect it. It is not an impossible nor an improbable thing, that the Government may want reforming, and the Constitution altering. In a lapse of years it is likely to be so, and then it is the duty and the right of the people to express their sentiments for the conservation of their liberties. But how is this to be done? Is it to be done by clamour, tumult, and riot? Is the sense of the nation, as to the establishment of order, to be demonstrated by the subversion of order? Are a few vile individuals first to paint, in false and glaring colours, the abuse of Government to the commonalty; next to instil in their ignorant minds sentiments of impiety, notions of equality, and principles of sedition; and lastly, are the people to give vent, through the mouths of these advocates, to feverish and infatuated ideas, as the genuine ebullition of their better sense? I think not, and I should imagine every one, who is not of their own body, will agree with me. In the bill of our rights and privileges, which I have quoted, sufficient provision is made for the security of our liberty and independence, by just and equitable means; but I do not perceive that we are allowed to call in

robbery, murder, and treason to our aid. We have a right to petition ; but I do not suppose it was ever intended that petitions should go unsigned. We have a right to have arms ; but I do not conceive that it was ever meant that we should pervert that right by manufacturing pikes, and breaking open gunsmiths to obtain weapons for the destruction of our fellow subjects. No ! These things are done in the name of *liberty*, but are a foul aspersion upon its sacred character. They shew too plainly how it is a thing little understood, and how its most strenuous votaries are bamboozled by wicked and designing men.

There is a patriotism and loyalty in “a manly, moral, regulated liberty,” without which it deserves not to be so entitled. A man who loves, as he ought, his privileges and rights, as a subject of the country where he was born, must love his country too. If he sees, in the power of the Crown or administration, any encroaching influence which is likely to diminish his freedom, he will zealously, but properly oppose it : he will not break out into rebellion, and show marks of gross disrespect to his Sovereign. There have been many alterations made, for the better, in our Constitution, that have not been effected by popular tumult and clamour. The triennial and septennial Parliaments were enacted, yet

there was no Mr. Hunt to make mad addresses to an idle rabble, nor any Mr. Cobbett, to write seditious pamphlets to an ignorant mob. Do these democrats presume to say that they are pleading the side of the people, and maintaining their liberties. Do they not know, that though every subject has a right of petition and opinion, in respectful language, yet to abuse that right, by turning it to personal insult and invective, violates the laws of his country. On the 26th of February, 1701, it was resolved, “that to print or publish any books or libels reflecting upon the proceedings of the House of Commons, or any member thereof, for or relating to his service therein, is a high violation of the rights and privileges of the House of Commons,”* Even “the publishing of the speeches delivered in Parliament is a very modern practice, and certainly a breach of its members; and as it may at any time be prohibited by enforcing the standing order of the House, printers of newspapers ought to be very careful lest by their misconduct they should deprive us of a daily indulgence, which we are very erroneously to regard as one of our inherent rights. “The reign of William III,” says the same author, “is the period to which we often refer the consummation of our liberties, without duly considering how much

* Custance, page 103.

they have since been enlarged ; yet we find that on the 22d April, 1699, a committee of the House of Commons “ resolved that the publishing the names of the members of this House, and reflecting upon them, and misrepresenting their proceedings in Parliament, is a breach of the privilege of this House, and destructive of the freedom of Parliament.” One would not imagine that they, who of late have so often infringed this law, should have complained of the curtailment of their privileges, and the abolition of their rights ; yet it is so. Indulging in a wanton spirit of discontent, that real liberty, which once was our boast, our happiness, and the envy of the world, is made a tool of, a convenient implement in the hands of men, who will use it to erect over our heads a dungeon for the incarceration of our freedom and our rights, more gloomy than the Bastile, and darker than the prison of the *Inquisition*.

If Lord Kenyon had lived to the present day, he might have witnessed the fulfilment of his prophecy. “ If,” said he, “ if ever the time shall come when factious men will overturn the Government of the country, they will begin their work by calumniating the courts of justice and both Houses of Parliament.” This is a lamentable truth. Men, now-a-days, the movers of

parliamentary reform, instead of inculcating principles of loyalty into the breasts of our poor, harrow up their natural feelings, and provoke every evil passion and propensity of their low-bred minds, to make them dissatisfied with the existing administration. They teach them to complain of an evil which, had it not been for their instructors, they never would have divined. “With them it is a sufficient motive to destroy an old scheme of things, because it is an old one :” and in many instances they have no other reason. This is not the way in which the common people should be told of their privileges, and made acquainted with their grievances, even if any such did exist. Though every Englishman should most certainly understand, and enjoy to the utmost, every right which is his by inheritance, yet he should not be led astray under the idea of possessing more power than he has or ought to have. The British Parliament is omnipotent : and the people have no more right to alter the legislature, than the subject of a foreign clime. They have no right either to destroy the whole, or to change or intermeddle with a part. They may complain of their grievances, or what they fancy to be such, in the adequate way that is allowed them, but not a step farther must they go : “it being the indispensable duty of every christian to sub-

mit himself to the lawful authority established in his country.”* “It is therefore of infinite importance, that they should not be suffered to imagine that their will, any more than that of Kings, is the standard of right and wrong. They ought to be persuaded that they are full as little entitled, and far less qualified, with safety to themselves, to use any arbitrary power whatever; that, therefore, they are not under a false show of liberty, but in truth, to exercise an unnatural, inverted domination, tyrannically to exact, from those who officiate in the State, not an entire devotion to their interest, which is their right, but an abject submission to their occasioned will: extinguishing thereby, in all those who serve them, all moral principle, all sense of dignity, all use of judgement, and all consistency of character; whilst, by the very same process, they give themselves up a proper, a suitable, but a most contemptible prey to the servile ambition of popular sycophants, or courtly flatterers.”†

The object of Mr. Hunt and his followers, is, I fear, the ruin of our Constitution: the conduct he has lately evinced, may, at least, give rise to such an apprehension. In his harangues at different places he has shewn none of that commanding dignity, that native

* Custance, 131.

† Burke, 141.

loyalty, and that noble firmness which should animate a man pleading the cause of his distressed or injured fellow-subjects, and that man a Briton! He is aiming at his own elevation, by means of popular agents whom he deludes. It may be said of him as the late Sir W. Draper said of Junius,* “he seeks,

— spargere voces
In vulgum ambiguas.

to raise suspicion in the minds of the people. But I hope that my countrymen will be no longer imposed upon by artful and designing men, or by wretches, who bankrupts in business, in fame and in fortune, mean nothing more than to involve this country in the same common ruin with themselves.”

That this has not been already accomplished, is a proof of the mercy of Heaven, and the vigilance of our Ministers, rather than of the inability or disinclination of the democrats; and at this moment, perhaps, instead of their nefarious schemes being defeated, through the interposition of Providence, by human operation, our goals might have been broken open—our barracks might have been destroyed—the tower stormed—the bank seized—our soldiery seduced—and England plunged into the vortex of a civil war. A formidable plan for the execution of these projects was laid, and might have been

* Letter 2d in Junius.

carried into effect. Then would our domestic peace have been violated, our families been rent asunder, our smiling fields have been converted into mournful cemeteries, and our populous cities into “desert places.” To contemplate every horrific consequence that might have followed, to pourtray every scene of rapine, lust, and murder, which would have associated us in guilt and in misery with our neighbour nation, is more than I should be willing to attempt, or my readers wish to peruse; I would rather we should conclude in expressing our gratitude at having escaped them to the “Author and Giver of all Good.”

My object in the foregoing sheets is now, I hope, nearly attained. I have endeavoured to point out the dangerous tendency of the measures that are employed to alienate the minds of our fellow-countrymen from their duty and allegiance, and to show, from the attestation of past events, how similar in its commencement has been every popular outcry of reform, and how finally they all have, and all must end, not only in the ruin of our Constitution, but in the overthrow and slavery of their promoters. If any one, as many doubtless will, make excuses for the turbulent outrages that have disgraced our island, and be inclined to think that they

have arisen momentarily from the pressure of severe distress, without any deep and long devised machinations of factious men, having contributed to organize and produce them, I pity their fatuity. I would have them call to mind that maxim of a great orator and profound statesman of ancient Rome—

“*Magni animi est præcipere cogitatione futura.*”—Cic. Off. I. 23.
I will indeed allow that the misery experienced by all classes of the community, but more particularly the lower orders, has been very great; but when I think how much the generosity and munificence of their superiors has done to alleviate their hardships, and with how much ingratitude it has been returned, I cannot but feel less sorrow for the one, whilst I conceive greater indignation against the other. It is not one of the least sins for which the democrats of these times will have to answer, that without relieving distress themselves, they have endeavoured to extinguish every sense of obligation, and every principle of gratitude in the breasts of the vulgar towards those who have saved them from famine and starvation; that they have represented charity as the effect of fear, and subscriptions as the donations of terror. The punishment of these evil doers will visit them from the hands of those whose cause they pretend to espouse. They will reign, indeed,

for a time, while infatuation shall triumph over reason, and madness hold place of common sense, but popularity is frail; they might learn from every day occurrences that it is an “echo of folly, and the shadow of renown,” and “experience might inform them that many who have been saluted with the huzzas of a crowd one day, have received their execrations the next; and many who by the popularity of their times have been held up as spotless patriots, have nevertheless appeared upon the historian’s page, when truth has triumphed over delusion, the assassins of liberty.”*

If again it be thought by others, that however the danger might have been imminent and apparent, it is now past, and there is no longer any needful cause for alarm, I think they are mistaken. As long as the **Habeas Corpus Act** is suspended under the suspicion of treason, we cannot esteem ourselves safe. Besides it is no argument, because the first symptoms of disaffection have been allayed by the powerful and vigorous exertions of Government, that therefore the spirit which has gone forth is utterly extinguished. We may not rest in the dull security of the present hour, we may not be lulled to repose in the lap of indolent indifference—that

* Lord Mansfield.

would, indeed, be giving an advantage to our enemies, which they would be but too glad to seize. We should rather shew ourselves alive to a sense of danger, so as to repel it whenever it may attack us; neither exhibiting an unnecessary terror, nor boasting an unbecoming confidence. It may be said, perhaps, that there is no latent spirit of insurrection, that accounts have been exaggerated, the danger magnified—and these sentiments they may indulge till they have lamentable cause to own their mistake. I believe, as Mazerai ingeniously remarks, that “*Dans ces choses là, on en dit souvent plus qu'il n'y en a; mais quelquefois aussi il ye n'a plus qu'on n'en dit.*” In the present instance I fear the latter is the sentiment I must adopt; to those who are of a different opinion I will say no more. If the warning voice of past generations will not arouse them to an apprehension of their danger, nothing till that danger itself shall convict them, will affect it: “if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

To conclude, if the subject I have so inefficiently treated on be fairly considered without the judgment of men being influenced by the spirit of party, or their decisions biassed by the interference of faction, I think there will be few

dissenters from this opinion—that if there be any loyalty, any patriotism in the subjects of these realms, and if there be any time more peculiarly urgent than another, for the minister, the magistrate, and the individual to discharge the duties of his respective sphere with honesty, activity, and zeal, that time is the present. It behoves no man now to shrink from his public duty for his private interest, or conceal his sentiments lest he endanger his life. We should stand in a firm, united, and determinate phalanx to oppose immoral principles by moral conduct, and preserve pure liberty from corrupt licentiousness. We should retain our ancient rights, by proving we deserve them, not by endeavouring to extend them. That by regular antidotes we may counteract irregular distempers, and by stopping the shouts of democrats and the clamor of rebellion, we may be able now, as heretofore, to proclaim to the world and to demand its acknowledgment of that character given us by Mr. Burke; that, however, other nations may have sunk in the scale of dignity and elevation, as they have risen in that of immorality and vice, “in England,”* at least “we have not yet been embowelled of our natural entrails; we still feel within us, and we cherish and cultivate those inbred sentiments which are the faithful

* Burke, 128.

guardians, the active monitors of our duty, the true supporters of all liberal and manly morals. We have not been drawn and trussed in order that we may be filled like stuffed birds in a museum with chaff and rags, and paltry blurred shreds of paper about the rights of man, we preserve the whole of our feelings still native and entire, unsophisticated by pedantry and infidelity. We have real hearts of flesh and blood beating in our bosoms. We fear God; we look up with awe to Kings; with affection to Parliaments; with duty to magistrates; with reverence to priests; and with respect to nobility. Why? because when such ideas are brought before our minds, it is *natural* to be so affected; because all other feelings are false and spurious, and tend to corrupt our minds, to vitiate our primary morals, to render us unfit for rational liberty, and by teaching us a servile, licentious, and abandoned insolence, to be our low sport for a few holidays, to make us perfectly fit for and justly deserving of slavery through the whole course of our lives."

March, 1817.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAGE 14, LINE 11.—For *quetes* read *gentes*.

28, —— 3.—For *glooming* read *gloomy*.

29, —— 3.—For *saturuatio* read *saturnalia*.

29, —— 12.—For *dinded* read *divided*.

31, —— 20.—For *ae* read *ae*.

31, —— 21.—For *ae* read *ac*.

31, —— 27.—For *qubiruarique* read *gubernarique*.

34, —— 15.—For *Δυσηοιλιοες* read *Δυσηοιλιες*.

40, —— 17.—For *boin* read *boni*.

40, —— 17.—For *fuaemus* read *favemus*.

The Note “*Burke*” at the bottom of Page 17, should
be read at “*palates*.¹”

